

Children's Safeguarding and Child protection Policy for  
**The Playing Therapist**

Play and Creative Arts Therapy Services

Written 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Next Review date 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023

## **Play Safe!**

**Safety issues - physical, emotional and confidentiality are especially crucial for children. For the safety of the child a play/creative arts therapist or therapeutic play practitioner must:**

- **Have an up-to-date, clear CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) Check**
- **Be a currently Certified or Accredited Member of PTUK**
- **Be receiving clinical supervision of their play therapy practice - the therapist's work is reviewed regularly by someone who has considerable experience**
- **Conduct the sessions in a safe environment**
- **Work within PTUK's [ethical framework](#) or an equivalent**
- **Have adequate professional indemnity and public liability insurance**
- **Be using clinical governance (quality control) procedures**

- **Have a safeguarding policy in place**

## Key Information

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## Terminology

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Child Protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18.

**Parents** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers and adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults at risk is defined as:**

An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),

is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

## Introduction

- Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Information Sharing 2018
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015

A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

## Policy statement

I, Emma Rioseco, trading as The Playing Therapist, abides by the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

I recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work I do and in all the decisions I take.

I have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as well as vulnerable adults.

# Policy Principles

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse

Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

I recognise that I may work with adults at risk and will apply the same safeguarding protocols to vulnerable adults.

# Policy Aims

I will:

- Protect children and young people, who attend therapeutic sessions, from harm.
- provide children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide my approach to child protection.
- actively promote and environment which is caring and promotes social, physical and mental wellbeing.
- To use a structured procedure which I will follow in cases of suspected abuse.

This policy applies to me. Failure to comply with this policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in my dismissal from PTUK.

# Values

I recognise:

- that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- the therapeutic relationship may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn as well as exhibiting signs of mental health problems.
- the impact on a child's mental health, behaviour and education when experiencing difficulties, abuse and/or neglect.

## Policy procedures

**Child and Adult Abuse:** Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

**Safeguarding children:** Safeguarding children is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **The Prevent duty**

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools
- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations.
- Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions.

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme.

**Radicalisation** is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

**Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

If I am concerned about a child's welfare:

If I notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue I will record these concerns and discuss with my clinical supervisor and LADO. If working in a school or other setting I also discuss my concerns in person with the DSL.

If the child begins to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a disclosure.

If a child makes a disclosure;

- I recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. They also understand that the therapeutic relationship may end if required by the circumstances.
- As the child may have to repeat their disclosure, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

During their conversation I will;

- listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm
- reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone;
- not be afraid of silences
- take what the child is disclosing seriously;
- do not ask leading questions.
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations;
- tell the child what will happen next.

I will let the child know that I will pass the information on and that I am not allowed to keep secrets.

I will write up the conversation as soon as possible and make this a matter of priority. The record should be signed and dated and should detail where the disclosure was made. Where relevant the report will be submitted to the DSL or the LADO and/or IFD.

## **Making a referral**

When working with children who are in settings other than school, concerns about children will be referred to the LADO and/or IFD.

The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's LADO and/or the police immediately.

Anybody can make a referral.

## **Training and Awareness:**

I will ensure that I undertake the appropriate level of safeguarding training and it will be current and valid.

Any training will ensure that I understand what safeguarding is and my role in safeguarding children.

Recognise any child potentially in need of safeguarding and act.

Understand how to report a safeguarding alert.

Understand dignity and respect when working with children.

Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy for any organisation who use my service.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing:**

I will maintain confidentiality in line with the guidance from my governing body PTUK. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection.



However, information will be shared with the Local Authority via a school's or organisation's Safeguarding Designated Lead, IFD or the LADO if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm. In addition, I may need to contribute to inter-agency working. I will contact the police if I believe a child is in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

### **Recording and Record Keeping:**

I will keep a written record about any concerns I have in regard to the safeguarding of a child or young person.

All records will be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

All records will be kept until the child's 25 birthday

### **Social Media:**

I am aware of the impact of harm to a child or young person when using social media and other digital internet use.

### **Use of Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology:**

I understand that it is unlawful to photograph children and young people without the explicit consent of the person with parental responsibilities.

### **Whistleblowing:**

It is important that people with whom I come in contact through the delivery of my professional services have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about

dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing. All service users are signposted to PTUK if they wish to raise a concern about my practice.

Further information can be found at

<https://playtherapy.org.uk/>

## **Important Contacts:**

### **INTEGRATED FRONT DOOR (IFD)**

<https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/professionals/working-together/making-a-referral>

Formally known as MASH

Contact on 01403 229900 or email [WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:WSChildrenservices@westsussex.gov.uk) and give as much information as you can.

### **WEST SUSSEX LADO (LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER)**

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/raise-a-concern-about-a-child/>

Contact on 033 022 26450 or email [LADO@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@westsussex.gov.uk)

### **POLICE**

Emergency - 999

Non-emergency - 101

### **NSPCC HELPLINE**

0808 800 5000